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MIDDLEBERG ACQUIRES CONSUMER UNIT IN DOWD

[Middleberg Communications](#) has acquired New York-based entertainment and consumer PR shop The Dowd Agency, which will serve as the consumer division for the tech and financial firm set up by Don Middleberg in 2006.

Middleberg is CEO of the combined entity and Dowd CEO Jim Dowd takes a managing director slot, as well as principal of the parent company.

Middleberg told O'Dwyer's that he met Dowd about two years ago, before the economic downturn, when Dowd approached him about a possible combination. "It's not an economic story of consolidation, but it's a story of two guys who continued to get to know one another and after it while it made sense to get together," he said.

"It's a perfect fit alongside our tech practice, corporate/financial practice and our work in marketing and media," he said. "Jim's broadcast and media relations background are superb."

Middleberg said his firm down between five and 10 percent for the year, which he noted is "the new up 20." He said Dowd is up about 20 percent for 2009.

Financial details of the deal were not released, but Middleberg posted 2008 revenue of \$2.7M with 12 staffers and the firm said post-Dowd merger it will surpass \$4M with nearly 25 employees.

Dowd, with seven key PR staffers, is led by the former director of publicity for NBC who launched "The Apprentice" to huge ratings in 2004. Dowd previously managed program publicity at The History Channel. Director of accounts, Stephanie Berman, is an NBC Universal PR vet and two staffers are former pages at NBC.

The firm continues to work with Apprentice producer Mark Burnett Productions as well as The Trump Organization, in addition to clients like Yahoo! and A&E, among others.

In a statement, Dowd called Middleberg a "legend in the industry" and said the combined firm will be formidable for clients in the consumer, social media and business sectors.

Middleberg sold his former 150-staffer firm to Havas in 2000. He set up MC when his non-compete agreements lapsed a few years ago.